

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7– PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

ISSUE: Provide an update to the Transportation Commission on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the following update.

BACKGROUND: The City is updating the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and developing Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which will be completed in late 2015. In December, 2014, staff provided an update to the Transportation Commission on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, including a discussion of the pedestrian and bicycle vision, goals, and objectives. At that time, the Commission requested that staff bring back this section of the draft plan once it received full input from the Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee (Ad Hoc Committee). At the February 18, 2015 Transportation Commission meeting, staff provided an overview of the project and its civic engagement process. Staff also provided an overview of the Plan’s vision, goals, objectives, and associated performance measures.

DISCUSSION: Since February of this year, the project has proceeded with the development of a draft bicycle network, pedestrian case study area recommendations, draft priority projects, and draft pedestrian and bicycle strategies. The following sections provide more information on these elements. A public meeting was held on September 24, 2015 to provide an overview of these plan elements and receive public input.

Bicycle Network

A draft bicycle network was developed to enable safe bicycle travel in and between all City neighborhoods. The network also improves connectivity between key destinations in Alexandria and destinations in neighboring jurisdictions. The draft network links these destinations and was designed to appeal to bicycle riders of different ages and abilities. The draft bicycle network

includes a range of facility types such as enhanced bicycle corridors, shared roadways, and trails. The draft network was developed based on input from the public, the Advisory Committee, and City staff. Staff performed fieldwork to identify vehicular speeds, volumes, traffic mix, existing curb / street dimensions, on-street parking, driveways, and adjacent land uses to inform the development of the draft network. The draft bicycle network is shown in Attachment 1.

Pedestrian Case Study Areas

Five Case Study Areas were chosen for an analysis of common pedestrian infrastructure challenges that exist in Alexandria today, such as non-compliance with ADA standards, conflicts between modes, access, difficult intersection crossings, lighting, and other safety issues. These Case Study Areas were selected because they represent certain themes or issues that are found throughout the City. While the focus was on pedestrian infrastructure, some localized bicycle issues/improvements have also been noted. The five case study areas include I-395 and Landmark Mall, Hammond Middle School, Duke Street, Mt. Vernon Avenue, and King Street near I-395. The consultant conducted a comprehensive walkthrough of each case study area to assess existing issues and identify infrastructure improvements.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Projects

The Pedestrian and Bicycle chapter of the Transportation Master Plan will include high priority projects for sidewalks, on-street bicycle facilities, and trails. The priority projects were determined based on the identification of all projects needed to fill existing gaps and barriers, using evaluation criteria that was reviewed by the staff, Advisory Committee and public, and endorsed by the Advisory Committee. The evaluation criteria included factors such as safety, existing or potential demand, connectivity, and geography. Each category was given a weight, with safety having the highest weight. The priority projects are shown in Attachment 2 and 3.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategies

Draft strategies have been developed for pedestrian and bicycle modes. These strategies identify specific measures that the City should undertake to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives, which also respond to the key issues and needs that were identified early in the planning process. For both the pedestrian and bicycle elements, there are engineering strategies and policy and program strategies. Some of the key strategies address maintenance of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities, access and safety, reducing conflicts between pedestrians and bicycles, and conducting additional education and outreach. The draft strategies are shown in Attachment 4.

Complete Streets Design Guidelines

Development of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines is underway. These guidelines clarify design options for new and upgraded streets throughout the City. The document provides the development community, City staff, and the community with a comprehensive source of reference for street designs.

Next Steps

This fall, staff will solicit input on the Plan's draft elements from various groups including the Planning Commission, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Environmental Policy Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, and Alexandria Community Public Schools (ACPS). Staff will develop a draft plan based on the input received, and is anticipates releasing this draft in the winter. Public input on the draft plan will be received through the AlexEngage process. The final plan will be presented to the Transportation Commission, Planning Commissions, and City Council in the spring of 2016 for endorsement and adoption.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Draft Bicycle Network

Attachment 2: Draft Bicycle Priority Projects

Attachment 3: Draft Pedestrian Priority Projects

Attachment 4: Draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategies